

*Broadening Regulation in a Context of Labour  
Market Change:  
Trade Unions and Immigration in Spain since the  
early 1990s*

*Miguel Martínez Lucio, Stefania Marino and  
Heather Connolly*

*UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER  
MANCHESTER BUSINESS SCHOOL*

*PROJECT FUNDED BY THE LEVERHULME TRUST*

*Manchester 2012*



---

The Leverhulme Trust

---



The University of Manchester

---



## **Researchers**

**Heather Connolly** has an MA and a PhD in Industrial Relations from the University of Warwick. She has previously worked as a researcher at the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) in Brussels and at the European Work and Employment Research Centre (EWERC) based in Manchester Business School and as a teaching fellow at the University of Warwick. From September 2012 she holds a full-time senior lectureship at De Montfort University, Leicester. Heather has conducted research into comparative trade union renewal strategies, radical unionism and trade union responses to migrant workers.

**Stefania Marino** has a PhD in Labour Studies from the Graduate School in Social Economic and Political Studies of the University of Milan and a Master Degree in Social and Political Studies from the University of Bologna. She has held visiting positions at the University of Amsterdam (AIAS-UvA and IMES-UvA). She has previously worked as teaching fellow for the University of Bologna and research associate at the University of Milan and she is currently a research associate at the European Work and Employment Research Centre (EWERC) of the Manchester Business School. Stefania has conducted research on trade union strategies towards vulnerable groups of workers with a specific interest for migrant and ethnic minority workers.

**Miguel Martinez Lucio** (Director of Project) studied for a BA (Hons.) in Economics and Government and then a SSRC sponsored MA in Latin American Government and Politics at Essex University (1979-1983). He completed his PhD in Industrial Relations in 1988 at the University of Warwick. HE is a professor at the University of Manchester, Manchester Business School. He is a Member of the Fairness at Work Research Centre and EWERC. He has conducted research on trade union development, the impact of management change and de-regulation at work, new forms of regulation and the role of the state, and the changing nature of labour market identities

### **Acknowledgments**

We would like to thank all the individuals we interviewed. In terms of our advisors we have sought advice from Professor Nelarine Cornelius at the University of Bradford's School of Management who has been useful in helping us frame some of our understanding of BME groups gain contacts. Steve Craig (TUC Tutor and UCATT project worker) and Deborah Littman (UNISON) have been important in advising and guiding us at key points. With regards to the three unions we are gratefully for the dialogue with, and advice from, Mohamed Haidor and Manuel Riesco of the Spanish CCOO union, and Jorge Aragon of the CCOO's First of May Foundation. Dirk Kloosterboer in the Dutch FNV has been a very useful link-point and basis for further insight into Dutch union renewal strategies. Mustapha Laboui was a key advisor of the project as the FNV specialist on the area. Whilst the ideas expressed in this report are ours, and we are responsible for them, the advisors have been a constant source of support and engagement. We would also like to thank Andrea Oates for copyediting the report and to Pat Gorham of the Manchester Business School for supporting us in administrative terms.

### **Leverhulme Trust**

The Leverhulme Trust was established in 1925 under the Will of the First Viscount Leverhulme with the instruction that its resources should be used to support "scholarships for the purposes of research and education." Since that time, the Trust has provided funding for research projects, fellowships, studentships, bursaries and prizes; it operates across all the academic disciplines, the ambition being to support talented individuals as they realise their personal vision in research and professional training. With annual funding of some £60 million, the Trust is amongst the largest all-subject providers of research funding in the UK.

## ***CONTENTS***

*1. INTRODUCTION*

*2. BACKGROUND TO IMMIGRATION*

*3. BACKGROUND TO TRADE UNIONS AND SPANISH INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS*

*4. METHODS*

*5. TRADE UNIONS AND IMMIGRATION*

*6. CHALLENGES*

*7. CONCLUSION*

## *1. Introduction*

Spain witnessed some of the most significant movements in terms of emigration throughout the 1940s and 1960s. In addition, in the past two decades it has gone from being a country where immigration has been virtually non-existent to being a country with one of the highest levels in Europe. In a context of political development, extensive social change and highly dualist labour markets – and since 1980 one of the highest levels of unemployment in Europe – Spain has had to assimilate and manage extensive workforce and population change. It is also a country with a major internal political debate on its identity and regional structure. The current context, in which unemployment and labour market fragmentation is the highest in Europe, brings to the fore the importance of this case study for understanding how industrial relations institutions have managed the social and economic transition of which immigration is a significant part. Spain has seen extraordinary responses from the state and trade unions despite institutional coverage in terms of regulation and management being less embedded than in their northern European counterparts. Within the European Trades Union Confederation (ETUC) the Spanish case is seen as an important one and a relevant benchmark for other trade unions in the European Union (EU). Given this phenomenon, we have endeavoured to study the development of these responses and the way they have been configured.

The question of union responses is an important one when it comes to the areas of immigration and social inclusion. The issues that migration gives rise to for immigrants, and for the employment relations system more generally, are broad. Questions of workers' rights, human rights, personal development, regulation and representation are just some of the areas that are affected by questions of migration and the way employers and the state relate to them. The nature of social exclusion is such that it gives rise to problems for immigrants in terms of their working conditions, their levels of pay, their personal security and dignity and their identity in ethnic and social terms. Trade unions find that in the current context, where employment relations are relatively disorganised and the economy is more fragmented in terms of the structure of the firm and the nature of work organisation, some sections of migrant communities constitute an increasingly vulnerable workforce, subject to high levels of exploitation by employers and difficult social circumstances. Hence there is a need to study how unions address these issues through a variety of practices and strategies.

We start by focusing on the background to immigration and then the nature of industrial relations and trade unionism in the country. After a discussion of our methods and our general approach to this research project, we focus on the way trade unions have responded to immigration. It is clear that traditional union work plays a role, for example the role of bargaining in enhancing the conditions and pay of workers including migrants. However, these practices work across a collective body of organised workers, and consequently affect workers involved in that bargaining unit, whether migrant or not. Another example is where trade unions have lobbied for an enhancement of universal welfare services. Hence, outlining the role of unions in enhancing the economic and social conditions of immigrant communities is difficult, because many established activities tend to affect all the individuals within the constituency represented, irrespective of their social background. Given this, we focus on strategies that target migrant and black and minority ethnic (BME) workers. Hence we focus on a range of activities in relation to migration: institutional relations with the state, the role of learning and training, the development of advisory and support centres which have been key to the Spanish response, the role of outreach workers and field workers, the link

with housing and welfare support, and the development of immigrant organisations, immigrant activists and immigrant sections of the unions.

## 2. Background to Immigration

As in other Mediterranean countries, Spain has long been a country of labour emigration. In the decades following the Second World War, Spanish workers moved to other Western European countries, especially France and Germany. A significant number also headed to South America. Until recently, internal migration has also been considerable. Many Spanish people moved from regions such as Andalusia, Extremadura and Galicia to Catalonia, the Madrid area and the Basque country. In the mid 1980s, however, Spain started to attract immigrants in a significant way, and in less than one decade it became a new country of labour immigration. This rapid change is explained on the one hand by the rapid decline of indigenous workers in the rural areas as result of internal migration, and on the other hand by employers' demand for cheap labour after the economic restructuring beginning in the late 1980s (Bruquetas-Callejo *et al.*, 2008; Calavita, 2005).

Immigration to Spain started to grow faster at the beginning of 2000, following the Spanish economic boom and that of the tourist industry, and was particularly concentrated in areas such as Madrid, Catalonia, Andalusia, Murcia, Valencia, the Balearic Islands and the Canary Islands.

According to the national statistical bureau (INE), in 2010 the number of immigrants reached 5,708,940, constituting 12.2% of the total population. This makes Spain one of the leading immigration countries in the European Union (EU). The largest groups of immigrants are Romanians (since 2008), Moroccans and Ecuadorians. However, many other nationalities are represented, among them many EU nationals (British are the biggest group with 387,226 residents) and Latin Americans (the biggest group consists of Colombians). The first immigration law (*LO 7/1985*, known as *Ley de Extranjería*) was passed in 1985, just before Spain joined the EU. This law established conditions for foreigners to remain in the country and introduced restrictions on entry. Non-EU workers could only be employed if employers could demonstrate that there were no available Spanish citizens or residents that could be hired. Furthermore, residence permits were granted on a one-year basis, encouraging the idea of temporary status for immigrants. According to some authors, both the establishment and the contents of this law were influenced more by Spain's entrance into the EU (Bruquetas-Callejo *et al.*, 2008) and by the pressure to comply with the Schengen Agreement (Colectivo IOE, 2001) than by a real necessity to regulate and restrict immigration. Immigration, in fact, was still very low at that time (241,971 immigrants representing just 0.63% of the population in 1986) and mainly consisted of European citizens. The only significant groups from outside Europe were Moroccans, Colombians, Chileans and Argentineans (Migueluez and Recio, 2008).

Hence immigration did not encourage the implementation of such restrictive rules as those modelled on the regulatory framework of other EU countries (Bruquetas-Callejo *et al.*, 2008). This policy of work permits (referred to as the general regime) had the effect of obstructing legal entry. In 1993, the Spanish government launched a quota system aimed at creating a direct route of entry into Spain for a limited number of applications and in particular economic sectors. This system, however, worked as a regularisation programme, since most applications were filed by undocumented migrants already in the country. Immigration law

was modified several times in the following years. However, it remained restrictive and increasingly conflicted with the rising demand for unskilled labour during the 1990s and 2000s.

In contrast to non-EU labour immigrants, until 1994 asylum seekers enjoyed a privileged status that provoked a stream of applications. However, following the EU treaty of 1994, asylum legislation was modified and adapted to meet the demands of the EU (Bruquetas-Callejo *et al.*, 2008). From 1995 onwards, restrictive asylum regulations made it difficult for foreigners claiming asylum to enter Spain. In the course of time, the restrictive entry policy resulted in a progressive increase in undocumented migrants: they were estimated to have risen from 388,000 in 2001 to 1,098,000 in 2005 (Cachón, 2007).

The government's response has been to continuously implement a series of regularisation programmes (six from 1985 to 2005), which in practice constituted one of the main ways of obtaining regular status. Such interventions were the result of bottom-up pressure by social actors as well as by regional and local governments (Bruquetas-Callejo *et al.*, 2008). Immigration legislation also continued to be modified. From 2000 job offers became anonymous to avoid the use of quotas as a regularisation mechanism. In addition, annual quotas had to be established in collaboration with regional governments, employer organisations and trade unions. Again, the participation of employer organisations and trade unions at regional level was encouraged.

While immigration policy-making was the exclusive domain of central government, integration policies first developed at regional and local levels. The first national integration policy framework was only established in 2004. In 2006, the National Programme for Citizenship and Integration (PECI) was implemented with the aim of promoting equality for immigrants. In contrast with immigration policies, the design and development of integration policies has been influenced by many more actors and stakeholders at different levels of society (Bruquetas-Callejo *et al.*, 2008).



### 3. Spanish Industrial Relations and Trade Union Contexts

#### *Industrial Relations in Spain*

Whilst the legacy of authoritarianism during the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Spanish political economy grows ever distant it, and the political response to it, continues to shape aspects of the labour relations system. Certain characteristics of the pre-1975 period were to have a strong influence on the subsequent development of the Spanish labour relations system. First, worker representation was strongly orientated to the workplace and company, although the effectiveness and depth of that representation is highly variable (Ortiz, 1996). While collective action at the workplace was integral to the anti-Francoist movement during its later years and the moment of political transition, it played a part in the construction of the identity of national labour organisations. Second, partial labour relations liberalisation in the late 1950s and 1960s prompted an uncoordinated and inefficient system of collective bargaining, which spawned a vast range of collective agreements that lacked a co-ordinated structure (Martinez Lucio, 1998). This too created subsequent problems in developing representative organisations. Third, state regulation in areas such as employment termination and job classification, and their defence by labour organisations later in the 1970s, in certain circumstances framed the debate on labour utilisation and flexibility at work and in the labour market. This was to become a major battleground under democracy. Fourth, employers attempted to offset what they perceived to be rigidities in employment through a wide array of bonuses and other special payments (Toharia 1988: 121). As a result central institutional control over this element of employment has been highly complex and relatively weak. Finally, this shifting, amorphous industrial relations environment meant that economic, social and political demands were never clearly differentiated, especially in the early decades of the post-Francoist period. It took three decades for a new type of 'consensus' around 'supply side' and regulatory issues to emerge, which started shaping a new form of political and social dialogue between labour and capital, e.g. training.

Spain is an economy in which small firms predominate. Despite the role of industrial districts in Catalonia and Madrid, conservatism and paternalistic employment relations, along with the attempted avoidance of regulation, remain the dominant characteristics of small-scale capital in Spain. Union membership and organisation tend to be much weaker in small firms, and workforces are generally dependent on union bodies external to the workplace, even where elected union representatives exist. The predominance of small-scale enterprise means that their industrial relations and personnel management practices are the prevalent pattern (cf. Prieto 1991: 193-4). Unfortunately, empirical data on the industrial relations of small firms remain relatively scarce. Research has concentrated on large companies, and in particular on multinationals.

A second notable feature of Spanish employers is the relative weakness of domestic capital *vis-à-vis* foreign companies, again the legacy of the country's late and dependent pattern of industrialisation (Martin and Velázquez, 1996). Foreign multinational companies (MNCs) have been importers of new industrial relations, personnel and human resource management (HRM) policies into Spanish industry. What is more, since the 1990s, larger-scale Spanish concerns are outward looking and they tend to act on the basis of their multinational interests, rather than their Spanish ones.

Since the 1980s, the public sector has undergone massive rationalisation and restructuring. INI – the state holding company for a range of public enterprises – was steadily run down as an organisational entity, and many companies were privatised. Public services such as the Post Office were steadily modernised through the use of temporary contracting and flexible employment measures. The decline of the state's productive role has deprived it of a means of direct regulation of the economy, and could be seen as weakening indigenous capital still further in relation to foreign capital. The privatisation of many public utilities has created a generation of Spanish MNCs that has become more outward looking, and in some cases seem obsessed with integrating more Americanised views of HRM within Spanish labour relations.

The organisation of business interests in Spain is highly unitary in formal terms (Pardo and Fernández, 1991). The employers' confederation CEOE established a near monopoly of representation following its foundation in 1977. It represents large and small, foreign and national, public and private firms alike, although there has been a tendency to rely on small and medium capital, since the multinationals which dominate the large firm sector tend to be less active in the organisation. The CEOE was formed out of various territorial and sectoral organisations, some of them with their roots in the old state union system. Its structure continues to be based on a mixture of territorial and sectoral bodies combining the economic functions of trade associations with the industrial relations role of employers' associations. Companies are generally members of provincial sectoral federations, which in turn have membership of the CEOE through provincial inter-sectoral groupings and through national-sectoral associations. The growth of regional government has encouraged a corresponding decentralisation of employers' organisations, and the autonomous communities are an important arena of employer action. One of the CEOE's most powerful members is the Catalanian FNT (*Formento del Trabajo Nacional*).

At the end of the 1970s, trade unionism was 'extraordinarily complex' and politicised (Miguélez, 1991: 214). Subsequently, the structure of representation was clarified by the increasing duopoly of the Union General de Trabajadores (UGT) and the Comisiones Obreras (CCOO). The CCOO emerged out of the spontaneous semi-clandestine workplace organisation of the dictatorship period. The UGT has a much longer history. Founded in 1888, it has always been closely linked to the Socialist Party (PSOE) founded a few years earlier. Despite its near total eclipse during the dictatorship years, it regained a leading role following the transition to democracy, helped by the establishment of a favourable legal-institutional framework. Hence Spanish labour relations, beyond specific autonomous regions, are strongly dominated by left-leaning unions. The once powerful anarcho-syndicalist tradition has not been able to recapture its dominant position of the early part of the century, although it exerts an influence around social mobilisations and alternative views. Within sectors such as the port industry, there remain strong independent unions with a preference for mobilisation.

Low union membership density – which has shifted between 10 and 20 per cent over the past thirty years – related financial difficulties, and reliance on state funding have led to talk of a 'crisis of representation' in Spanish unions. In terms of the emergence of a new form of immigration and labour mobility – and the increasing presence of a female workforce – the reality is of a labour movement attempting to respond to the institutional needs of such groups. This is done through relevant structures internally and state-supported servicing programmes, as with immigrants, and even greater attempts at more inclusive approaches in terms of the servicing and support of diverse union membership bases. The membership figures give an incomplete picture of union influence. First, Jordana (1996) argues that union

membership in the 1970s has been significantly overstated; thus the picture of subsequent decline is misleading. Second, as in France, formal union 'representativeness' for the purposes of reaching collective agreements and for participation in tripartite bodies, is judged according to the results in the workplace elections in which all employees, whether union members or not, are entitled to vote. Participation of the workforce in these elections is high. In companies where elections take place (in many smaller companies, elections are not held because of a lack of union resources), participation is around 80 per cent, and around three-quarters of the votes go to the two main unions. Unlike in France, the two major unions have consolidated their position in workers' committee elections and non-union representation has fallen away. The combined share of the UGT and the CCOO rose from 56.2 per cent in 1978 to well over 80 per cent by the 1990s – and it has remained more or less at this level ever since. Thus the Spanish union movement has been labelled a 'voters' trade unionism' rather than a 'members' trade unionism' (Martin Valverde, 1991: 24–5). In other words, influence depends on electoral success as much as on membership figures. In these terms, the main Spanish unions appear to be more favourably regarded and more widely supported by workers than their membership figures might indicate.

There have been important developments in the dynamics of inter-union relationships over the past decade, particularly a certain rapprochement between the UGT and the CCOO. The reasons are diverse. One was the growing rift between the UGT and the PSOE. Against a background of European integration and more recently the demands of monetary union, socialist governments of the 1980s and 1990s abandoned socially progressive policies and pushed through legislation to deregulate labour markets, cut state expenditure and reform social security systems. In 1988, the UGT and the CCOO jointly called a widely supported 24-hour general strike, forcing concessions from the government. The changes in the communist left in the early 1990s have also removed barriers to co-operation between the two confederations, and in recent years there has been a more pragmatic involvement by the CCOO in bargaining over work organisation issues at company level. In 1996, in a major development in union relations, the two main confederations launched a co-ordinated joint collective bargaining strategy to extend the remit and content of bargaining, and to lay down bargaining priorities aimed at maintaining employment levels and improving employment security. Since 1996 they have also begun to cooperate with the Socialist Party (PSOE) and the right wing Popular Party (PP) governments through a joint approach on health and safety, training, migration and other areas. Co-ordination between these two main unions has provided a coherence and consensus to labour relations that has both positive features (regulatory coherence) and negative ones (a relative dependence on the state and formal systems of regulation).

### *Immigration and Unions*

Over the course of the 1990s the situation in Spain in relation to the labour market began to change with an older workforce, the increasing presence of women in the labour market and a sudden increase in immigration. Whilst unemployment had rarely been below 15% in the first 25 years of the new democracy, women's participation in the labour market has remained relatively low. The 1990s began to see a variety of sectors such as construction, agriculture and hospitality turn to immigrant labour sources. Spain's immigration level up until the 1990s was one of the lowest in Europe, having emerged from a relatively closed and internally-orientated economy under the dictatorship in terms of labour markets. If anything, the regime prioritised emigration as a way of sustaining managed urban development and growth during the 1960s and 1970s. However during the 1990s immigration from North Africa, Latin

America (especially Ecuador and Colombia), and Eastern Europe (Romania and Poland in particular) meant that a new workforce was arriving and settling in key urban areas and agricultural towns. In 1996 1.4 per cent of the population was born overseas, whereas in 2008 it was 11.33 per cent (Aragon Medina *et al.*, 2009).

According to most trade unionists, this led to a range of challenges for the labour movement due to a large presence of immigrants in the informal economy – one of the largest in Europe and prevalent in areas such as hospitality and agriculture – and an increasing use of migration in key sectors such as construction. Trade unionists from the CCOO and the UGT were encountering a range of bad employment practices, health and safety hazards and low pay levels emerging among small and medium-sized firms who employed immigrants. These were relatively more significant to the Spanish economy compared to countries such as the United Kingdom (UK) or Germany. There was a growing awareness that as workers, immigrants were subject to high levels of exploitation and susceptible to greater risks to their health and safety, due to the culture of smaller firms and their tendency to bypass regulations in many cases, whilst also placing pressure on the system of regulation within labour markets, such as collective bargaining, by undercutting wages. Spanish unions had developed internal organisational structures for emigrants, but had not really considered immigrants during the 1980s. Anti-racist initiatives at work and in society were not a priority within the labour movement. In part this was due to initially low levels of immigration and a preference – according to our research – to see exploitation mainly in class terms. Immigrants were seen to be exploited due to their precarious employment relations and low levels of social inclusion mechanisms in society. This was, then, the main narrative within both the main unions (although the anarcho-syndicalist trade unions have been more focused on the impact of racism and xenophobia within society). National and local union interviewees in larger unions felt that the major challenge was in extending and enhancing the mechanisms for regulating work, which were already in place in terms of sectoral, regional and company level bargaining, along with a body of union representation within the firm. However, whilst there are works council and union elections in Spain every four years that determine worker representation in the firm, and which receive 80% to 90% turnouts from the workforce, in smaller and medium-sized firms the role and scope of the representatives have always been a challenge, and in parts limited (Martinez Lucio, 2008).

The scale of immigration, its intensity in a short period of time, and the impact it was having on the regulation of work, brought a range of responses from Spanish unions in the 1990s. Unions began developing immigrant sections aimed at raising the question of immigration and the levels of support for immigrants within the union. For example, the CCOO department for emigration mutated into one dealing with immigration. This occurred with the involvement of immigrant members. These sections were secretariats, and unlike their counterparts in some unions in the UK, for example, they did not have systematic internal representative mechanisms and democratic processes such as annual conferences for immigrant members – although they were more expansive in their presence. Interviews with senior members in the relevant secretariats between 2008 and 2010 revealed that the idea of autonomous immigrant sections was not ‘on the table and neither should they be’. However, most of Spain’s leading and majority trade unions have developed and involved a series of immigrant activists. A series of leading figures have begun to play a role within these sections, although in national conferences and congresses of the unions the presence of immigrants is not visible to any great extent. These new voices – whilst still less apparent at leadership level – have been central to developing a range of campaigns on questions of legality and legalisation. Unions have been at the forefront of pushing governments – both on

the right and left – into wide-ranging amnesties for undocumented immigrants. The last decade has also seen the development of national tripartite institutions at the level of the state where unions, employers, specific immigrant bodies and other ‘social partners’ work alongside government representatives on a range of advisory projects for government initiatives and research projects similar to others dealing with, for example, learning (Guillen Rodriguez et al, 2008). These bodies have become a form of neo-corporatist dimension of immigrant economic and social interests, which involve union engagement and advice. These are bodies that serve to provide a network for communicating concerns and discussions.

Trade unions have taken this further through an institutional strategy that has called for and gained resources for learning and support – including that of the local level of state administration where unions have developed information services, local social services for younger workers, emergency housing and other services (Aragon Medina *et al.*, 2009). This is relevant because the role of the state in the moment of neo-liberalism is not solely concerned with criminalising immigrants (see Hiemstra, 2009) but also with developing social services in relation to such communities. The major unions have developed their services with new immigrant communities in mind with particular reference to information and learning. They have begun to use their leverage in terms of learning and training funds (see Rigby, 2002) as a way of developing courses on language and basic information relevant for immigrants in terms of labour markets. This service approach varies according to region, but both Socialist and Conservative regions have developed high levels of commitment in terms of support – albeit within a welfare state context that remains underdeveloped by Western European standards in key areas such as housing and social services (see Alonso, 2007). At the heart of these developments is the systematic creation in the past ten to twenty years of information centres throughout Spain, which in numerical terms is one of the largest.

#### *4. Methods*

The research for this report is part of a three-country study with 160 interviews which took place from 2008–2011. The Spanish case consists of 46 interviews conducted with trade union officials and activists, public bodies, migrant organisations, and immigrants in a number of different regions in Spain as part of a wider project by the authors studying trade unions, migration and social exclusion and inclusion in the Netherlands, Spain and the UK and funded by the Leverhulme Trust. The key interviews, both semi-structured and unstructured, have been conducted with trade union officials and activists at all levels of the Comisiones Obreras (CCOO) and the Union General de Trabajadores (UGT), including specific migrant organisations (especially Ecuadorian and Colombian organisations). The research methodology has been qualitative with a focus on gaining an in-depth understanding of the evolution of trade union strategies in Spain. The research has also included some participant observation of trade union congresses and visits to trade union offices and union-run migrant worker information centres and offices in five regional states within Spain.

#### *5. Trade Unions and Immigration – Strategies and Structures*

##### *a) Engaging the State*

Whilst state–labour relations have normally been strategic and not as embedded in Spain as they are in Austria or Sweden, for example, this dimension of trade union strategy has been

significant in creating spaces around which regulatory reform and change could be discussed and supported in relation to the changing labour market and immigration. Firstly, trade unions have steadily become involved in a range of tripartite bodies at national and local levels. The national bodies have involved trade unions, employers and immigrant organisations and they are involved in a range of discussions with the state on immigration, labour market needs and social issues. These have allowed a high-level dialogue to evolve within various social and economic-related ministries. These have facilitated dialogue between trade unions and various immigrant organisations, although the latter have varied in their resources and strategic focus. The role of the trade union movement in relation to the state is variable – some would argue that there have been a range of national-level institutional relations and agreements (Guillen *et al.*, 2009) whilst others have been more sanguine in their analysis (Martinez Lucio, 1998 and 2008). However, the subject of immigration has been a significant area for trade union intervention. The trade union movement has been involved at national level in strategic discussions about residency and workers' rights. In addition, the role of 'amnesties' for undocumented workers, which has periodically been implemented to alleviate social and regulatory pressures within the labour market, has involved to varying degrees the main trade unions and their respective heads of immigration and employment. This is an important feature of the dialogue, which in countries such as the UK, for example, does not exist. Relations between the Ministry of Labour and the majority unions on such issues are frequent, with committees chaired by leading academics. Since the re-labelling of the Ministry of Labour as the Ministry of Labour and Immigration (which has been mirrored in the majority unions) these relations have continued further, albeit interspersed with moments of significant difference and disagreement. The election of the Socialists in 2003 was seen as a major step forward in this respect, although relations with the previous right-wing administration were significant. This institutional dynamic has been paralleled by developments at regional government level. In some cases, such as Aragon, we saw a very close relationship between the main unions and the relevant governmental departments up until 2011. The dialogue has focused on assisting social dialogue and representation throughout the local level of the region, and in identifying social and welfare needs.

The national and regional level of the state has also developed active links with immigrant bodies, with state funding and forums being offered so as to support the role and voice of immigrants. The challenge has been the unstable nature of immigrant organisation and the variation of organisational and cultural practices between various immigrant communities. However, the regional tiers of the state and organised labour have in that case included representatives from various communities. This was the case in Castille La Mancha, which up until 2011 was Socialist in terms of governance, and Castille Leon, which was under the right wing Popular Party. In the case of the Madrid region, the nature of the right wing presidency and its hostility to social dialogue and the trade unions provided a counterpoint to what was a relative norm in Spain overall in such matters. Immigrant bodies within the Colombian and Ecuadorian communities commented on the growing reticence and uncertainty about dialogue and funding within that specific regional community. Political contingencies and the growing electoral sensitivities around immigration issues may begin to alter this strategic social dialogue at regional level, not least due to the serious financial situation facing the country.

This has been paralleled by increasing levels of trade union intervention in regional and local government forums. These are especially present in agricultural areas where immigration has become a vital feature of the labour market. Local tripartite bodies are presented in regions as

diverse as Castille La Mancha and Aragon. They engage with issues related to social needs (e.g. housing and education), economic relations (employment and the role of agencies for example), and issues of citizenship and learning, for example. The unions also use such bodies to propagate the role of collective bargaining and national and provincial agreements within sectors such as agriculture, thus sustaining a dialogue or influence on employers in such sectors through national bargaining negotiations and these local bodies. These are normally propelled politically by a desire to avoid social exclusion, and in particular social conflict, which has been apparent through various incidents and xenophobic events. Hence these structures allow the trade unions to influence the regulatory control of employers with immigrant workforces and to influence public policy; although the outcomes are not always consistent.

However, major strides towards social dialogue and social welfare organisation have been made at local city, town and village government level. In a major study of this dimension of union activity it was shown how such local-level structures of representation have been central to the provision and organisation of specific social services, but also to the framework of dialogue and the climate of trust that has been constructed between actors and local communities on the subject of immigration (Aragon *et al.*, 2009). Our research has confirmed this. The trade unions have been pivotal in many cases in establishing special forums that cover key towns or clusters, or towns and villages, with the aim of developing a dialogue between local councillors, employers, unions, and when possible migrant organisations on issues such as housing and other welfare services. In addition, in agricultural areas in Castille La Mancha more systematic ways of monitoring employment conditions have been developed. In fact, many of these forums have addressed and even enacted employment procedures and recruitment mechanisms to ensure fairness, and some amount of regulation with regards to workers, particularly in agriculture. It is hard to quantify the extent and outcome of these measures, but they are a feature of various regions and areas. These help to bring employers into the context of discussion and to try to liaise between local and immigrant populations and create an element of planning and awareness. The challenge in Spain has been the high proportion of small and medium-sized employers along with an extensive informal economy. The presence of paternalistic employment practices and the limited reach of sectoral and provincial collective agreements for specific segments of agriculture were questions addressed within these forums.

Another area that has seen the state involve itself alongside trade unions has been learning and training. Through various tripartite bodies and organisations the trade union movement has managed to link the funds available for training into specific local projects and local training centres. These have also been subject to the local forums discussed above. The role of trade unions in learning and training has expanded in the past twenty years, with significant political influence being held over the allocation of funds (Martínez Lucio *et al.*, 2007). These funds have allowed training courses to be held within trade union centres and to support learning initiatives beyond traditional educational structures within local government and social organisations. They are also very significant in careers advice, which is partly offered by trade unions and funded by the state.

The level of the state and its various bodies have been a reference point for trade unions in terms of social dialogue, the opening of representative spaces to various organisations within immigrant communities, and the provision of services on the front line. These initiatives have mainly been taken up by trade union officers inside the apparatus of the union – especially those from immigrant, social affairs and equality departments. Activists and local

territorially-based representatives have played a role and worked alongside these, but in the main it has been the former who have driven this process. The ability to link to the state therefore represents an important dimension of the Spanish response, as we will see in the way information and support services have been developed. The outcome of this link with the state has been significant support for direct union support for migrants in various aspects of their needs.

*b) Community and communication: the role of advisory centres*

Trade unions have developed a network of information offices and centres in virtually every major Spanish city. These have been developed by unions, especially the CCOO and the UGT. They are normally located in local union offices, and their role is to act as a first port of call for immigrants in relation to work and other social- or labour-related concerns. There are many immigrant centres and law firms focused on these types of activity, but none can compare to the sheer extent and breadth of the union network – something which is unusual in Europe. One of the features of this new form of engagement with immigrants is that the state provides a large part of the funding of such resources. This allows trade unions, who have been identified as being a key part of the provision of such services, to develop trade union-oriented information and a strategy of support centres more generally. The centres provide a range of information services in relation to employment, citizenship, social rights and housing – amongst others – although it needs to be clear that these are not immigrant-led offices, but they may have trade unionists from an immigrant background involved. The unions, in the main, are expected to keep clear records of such activities. A range of individuals are employed in the centres, and in some cases there can be anything up to half a dozen people working in one capacity or another, although numbers vary between offices. Our research covered a selection of cities in the centre and north of Spain (Madrid, Toledo, Valladolid, and Oviedo) – and included visits to the centres and interviews with their staff and the relevant union. These offices were not always located in areas where immigrant communities would reside, but in the main trade union offices. The problem with these developments – which are much lauded within the official European trade union movement – is that they tend to be driven as a service and organised around a professional network of trade unionists. They do not always play a role in linking immigrants into the main body of the trade union – although the realisation of this in recent years has been acknowledged and responded to – and they have not really served as a basis for a new network of immigrant activists (partly because it is not immigrant activists who are involved in them).

In a place such as Oviedo, the CCOO's offices (CITEs) would attend to at least 3,000 individuals a year. It is clear that as worker centres they are mainly information-based and formal in their approach to attending to immigrants. They open a file on a worker, which is logged on a main server so people can return for further advice. This allows, for example, seasonal agricultural workers, as they move across Spain, to be supported and logged when they have visited different offices in different regions according to the harvesting calendar. In comparative terms across Europe the experience of the CCOO's and the UGT's developments in this area were accepted as a leading 'benchmark and good practice' (European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) officer).

The CITEs do not themselves organise broader social activity, coalition building or communication strategies with the local immigrant groups. This is driven mainly by the immigration departments of the unions and those co-ordinating some of the offices in question. Hence, one sees that the actual service provision element is divided from the



broader immigration-related strategies of the unions. This means that as centres for bringing into the trade union movement workers who are from an immigrant background, there may be less of a role than at first anticipated. In the geographic areas researched, links with organised immigrant groups were sporadic, as far as the unions were concerned, due to the problems of sustainability that such groups had. This varied according to the extent and politics of different immigrant communities. Hence, in the case of the region Castille Leon, coalition building was a problem even if the CCOO union had organised a range of regional level cultural events. However, in Madrid and Barcelona links with immigrant organisations were more common and stable.

There were concerns within the CCOO locally that there was a need to connect traditional CCOO work into the CITEs and the ‘clients’ they had. In the case of the UGT in Oviedo, there was an acknowledgement that the service had become more detached, and that there was a need to rethink such service provision. In 2009 the CCOO began to integrate its immigration section into its employment section, which led to a joint department at national and regional level – although this mirrored developments in certain state departments. This was seen as a vital step for integrating the issue of immigration into the mainstream of the union’s work. There were also discussions around building a more proactive network of CITE activists throughout the country with the aim of using it for information gathering, and as a link into the immigrant population. However, it was not seen as the basis for a stand-alone section or autonomous body according to senior members of the CCOO. This question of integrating the community dynamic into broader strategies around social inclusion and union activism is therefore a challenge, even if the experience of information centres such as Spain’s is one of the most elaborate in Europe. For the UGT this was a greater problem, with their immigrant worker offices being considered to be part of the servicing logic of the union, and the work seen as being more technical and ideological in approach. Relevant activists in the specific regional union structures were, for example, concerned with the way local regional leaderships were increasingly disconnected from the local and community dimensions of the union, where once they would have visited local sites more often. In this instance, it was recalled how regional level union officers would visit the local town and city offices more regularly and be more connected to the local dynamic. Instead, the interviewees felt that now it was only during the trade union elections every four years that people from the regional union offices, and even the larger workplaces, visited local communities and small to medium-sized employers.

The new ‘community union’ dimension and the link to the past ‘community’ of the union is not so clear in such developments. In the CCOO this dilemma has in recent years been especially apparent, given its history. The CITEs are in part contextualised in terms of the ‘socio-political’ identity of the union – itself a changing object of internal union politics within the CCOO – but remain ambivalently linked to the union’s overall work and activities. Hence in recent years, the CCOO has begun to use the CITEs as an entry into the mainstream activity of the union by raising reference to the role of membership and union activity. Hence, whilst they form a vital part of support for immigrants in terms of their rights, recent strategies have been developed to integrate such immigrant-facing activities more clearly. This demonstrates the way such highly elaborate structures of worker support may be formally linked to the union, but not necessarily its broader politics of community engagement and activism – leading to internal political discussions. However, irrespective of these strategic and political issues, this aspect of trade union intervention is one of the most significant in the EU.

### *c) Roaming regulation*

Regulation depends on implementation and enforcement. The changing nature of the workplace and the labour market has brought new challenges in regulating employment conditions due to subcontracting, agency work and the development of an increasingly embedded informal economy. Whilst most areas of work have a relevant collective agreement covering basic terms and conditions – in the form of a company or national or provincial sector agreement – implementation may be uneven in the case of SMEs and sectors such as hospitality and construction, which are precisely where significant parts of the immigrant community work.

In response to this, trade unions have developed a greater emphasis on fieldwork and visits. In the case of agriculture the UGT, through a cluster of officials, visits groups of workers during the key moments of harvesting for example. They target areas and work alongside local trade unionists – some of whom may be immigrants themselves – with the aim of explaining the agreed terms and conditions of employment to workers. They also attempt to pick up on grievances and cases of bad employment practice. The workforce carrying out harvesting, such as Romanian tomato pickers, can be very short term and mobile. This means that each year the workforce can be different and there is a need to constantly monitor and ensure there is communication with the workers and that employers are checked. The UGT and the CCOO also check the housing conditions of the workforce (this is explained in greater detail below). In one case a van that allows the seats to swivel so it becomes a meeting and consultation area is used. This means that workers can meet discreetly. The union also uses relevant collective bargaining meetings for each type of agricultural produce to communicate broader issues to employer organisations, and at local level to gather information on a range of questions. However, the nature of employment and the networks amongst smaller employers can undermine and even invalidate much of this institutional effort. The use of visits and fieldwork therefore, allows the unions to connect directly; but this strategy depends on the availability of a significant numbers of trade unionists, given the expansive and intensive nature of agricultural workers in Spain.

This more direct field-based research is a common feature of trade unionism, but in sectors such as construction the CCOO in Madrid also began to recruit and use Moroccan workers. The regional level of the union identified Moroccan workers who had a positive predisposition to the trade union and brought them into the formal apparatus of the union. They were deployed for visits to construction sites, public places where informal recruitment took place and local community centres. They were able to communicate pay rates and other working conditions, and attempt to recruit individuals into the trade union. In the case of hospitality, a Moroccan trade unionist in the CCOO also linked the trade union into local community organisations and political networks inside the Moroccan community. This effort to bring individuals into the core apparatus of the trade union has become a common feature of some European trade unions, but is especially vital in a context where the trade union movement lacks immigrant activists.

These strategies are geared towards connecting with an increasingly decentralised workforce and are linked to trade union elections that are held every four years. These elected worker representatives become the official voice of the workforce and in larger firms they form the basis of the works council. Trade unions compete against each other during this process. Trade unions organise campaigns in established and larger workplaces through their branches, but in smaller companies they are normally visited by a team of trade union

representatives from other workplaces, or officials from local or regional offices of the union. There are concerns that with SMEs many trade union representatives are isolated once the electoral process is over, and there have been questions as to whether the elections are a symbolic competition between trade unions to ascertain who are the 'majority trade unions' and who can be involved in various state forums. However, these elections nevertheless force the unions to engage with a wide group of workers and communicate a range of worker rights and policies. Increasingly this activity has been linked to the logic, outlined earlier, of connecting and communicating with the more disconnected constituencies of the workforce. They are part of a process that organises many of the unions' resources and focuses them on the whole workforce. There were indications from our research that these have become more sensitive to immigration-related issues.

*d) Welfare and Culture: engaging with immigration beyond the field of work*

A curious finding of our research relates to the way that Spanish trade unions have tried to cast a wider net in relation to the subject of immigration by addressing non-workplace and employment issues. In the case of the UGT's work in agriculture, the visits to various areas outlined above involved detailed inspections of housing and temporary accommodation. The union would inspect, and if necessary threaten, employers with legal action if the accommodation was problematic. On a visit to the UGT the researcher was presented with substantial documentation and archives (consisting of reports and photographs) that covered the accommodation of seasonal workers across a wide number of Spanish provinces. The quality of the material was detailed and suggested that this was a central feature of the visits. These initiatives allowed the union to work alongside the labour inspectorate and various other public bodies. The subject of housing and accommodation was also linked into collective bargaining and broader meetings with employers. It allowed the union to access workers in a broader manner and legitimise its presence, given the sometimes poor conditions in which immigrants are housed. The visits were therefore systematic in nature, although the number of people available to do them was a challenge to the union.

This question of housing and accommodation was also addressed by trade unionists in terms of longer term residency. Trade unionists in the UGT in Aragon addressed the difficulty immigrants had in getting accommodation. It was common for immigrants seeking accommodation to be refused access, or have the level of rent increased. Interviews with immigrants confirmed how the level of rents varied according to ethnicity, with Dominicans sometimes paying more, for example. The UGT in this regional case managed to establish a service whereby they would help immigrants to find accommodation and ensure that the right conditions and rent levels were offered. In fact, the union went further at one stage and set up a temporary accommodation agency and service to bring together landlords and tenants in a regulated and co-ordinated manner. As with the employment-agency style approach discussed earlier, the trade union intervened as an intermediary body. These were not generalised practices, but were common in various regions and illustrate the manner in which the trade union has sought to address immigration in a broader manner. It also shows how the union can sustain its links to the community. Sustaining these initiatives can be an organisational challenge, but they run alongside many of the services outlined above.

This strategy of extending the remit of the union also has a cultural dimension. Firstly, in Castille Leon the CCOO established cross-cultural events with the aim of engaging migrant communities and creating a dialogue and reference point for the trade union. These cultural interventions were underpinned by engaging with international campaigns on human rights

and democratic struggles. The identity of the trade unions – especially the CCOO – allowed it to link with movements and struggles in North Africa and South America through meetings, joint projects and coalitions. This is a missing link in much of the discussion on the question of unions and immigration. The role of international development and democratic rights acts as a lever to connect unions – and represent them – in terms of the political concerns and experiences of immigrants in Spain, but also in relation to their home country. Hence the political campaigning and international political mobilisation of the unions is an important link and basis for activity, permitted by the explicit political activity and identity of the unions. The question of refugee status and legal documentation was an area that minority left unions were also effective in mobilising on, hence allowing a broader engagement with the new workforce.

This cultural dimension was essential to the CCOO's research-based First of May Foundation. The development of a series of projects on emigration and immigration were focused on facilitating an active archive and political sensibility to questions of migration in general as a core part of Spanish national and labour identity. One project focused on collating a vast array of materials (documents and photographs) from Spanish political and economic emigrants abroad. The archives were seen as one of the most extensive in Spain. It led to a series of high quality publications of an academic and popular nature, broadening the imaginary landscape of migration and linking immigration with emigration. Some projects focused on specific groups of workers such as Spanish female domestic workers in parts of Europe during the 1940s and 1950s – this being pertinent, given the extensive use of immigrants as domestic workers in contemporary Spain. Other projects consisted of collating posters of union and immigrant campaigns throughout Europe. Very few – if any – studies on immigration and unions address these issues, partly due to a masculine view of industrial relations. Yet these cultural interventions are an essential feature of trade union responses because they contextualise action and ideas within a broader historical framework. They also sensitise the trade union and the workforce to the broader question and experience of migration, especially in a context of fading memories of the Spanish diaspora. It shows a commitment to inform strategy with political and historical sensitivities and broaden not just the reach of the union, but its actual social focus.

#### *e) Coalitions and Social Movements: Voice and Representation*

This raises a challenge for the Spanish labour movement. Whilst working in terms of a class discourse and state-related approach to social solidarity (to varying extents) in relation to migration, the question of race and ethnicity as a feature of social exclusion has not been paramount. Many interviewees have argued that the problems facing immigrants are related to the nature of the labour market. As stated above, anti-racist initiatives at work and in society were not a priority within the labour movement due to low levels of immigration during the formation of the new trade union movement after the dictatorship of Franco (from the 1970s onwards). This has also been reflected in the absence of systematic attempts to create immigrant activist networks, although there is an emerging body of immigrants within the union, and also activists who develop their own informal networks. The argument of various interviewees within the UGT and the CCOO from a Spanish background is that this would lead to separatism, and that the British model of black workers' sections would not be appropriate given the low levels of activism within immigrant communities in relation to work-related politics. Training of a specialist nature for such groups is not deemed necessary, as the objective is to have any individuals engaged into the mainstream of trade union

education, so the aim as expressed to us was getting immigrants into these mainstream union courses. The argument we were confronted with was that bringing migrants into activist roles was proving to be challenging. Whilst membership levels were increasing amongst migrants, activists and trade union representatives were unlikely to be immigrants. Within the public sector this was almost non-existent due to the manner in which recruitment and nationality are bound together, especially in the civil service. In countries such as the Netherlands and the UK especially, the public sector unions have been at the forefront of many equality and race initiatives, in part due to the presence of BME workers. The trade unions – the UGT and the CCOO – therefore brought immigrants into officer and formal roles within their structures. There were no national or local networks, or special bodies, that linked these individuals together. However, inclusion was considered to be best arranged around the role of supported individuals from immigrant communities who could connect with immigrant communities on a ‘like-for-like’ basis. Within the construction and hospitality sectors of the Madrid Region CCOO the presence of such individuals – who had been brought on board by indigenous regional officers and leaders – were proving to be pivotal in connecting with the local community of immigrant workers. They were able to go into workplaces and engage with individuals from their own background and convey information. They were also individuals that migrants could be asked to see once they came into the office.

In addition to these internal bureaucratic initiatives there was a systematic attempt to open a dialogue with immigrant organisations. In the case of the CCOO, there were formal alliances with organisations within such communities through periodic meetings and mutual exchanges of information. These approaches were clearly apparent in our work as joint protocols were signed and open assemblies held in immigrant communities through these bodies. During the 24-hour general strike of 2011 these links were used to connect and convey messages to various parts of the local immigrant communities, as in the case of Madrid. Latin American communities tended towards the CCOO, with Eastern Europeans being less present, but Romanian bodies did have links with the UGT. Many organisations concerned with the fate of undocumented workers also had links with the anarcho-syndicalist streams in the Spanish labour movement (the CNT and the CGT). There was a dialogue between immigrant organisations and the trade unions – partly underpinned by national and local tripartite forums in the state – although individual links and networks remained important to these. Part of the challenge facing this relationship was that many immigrant organisations also had real sustainability issues. The most stable dialogue between the majority trade unions and immigrant community representatives was with established bodies with a strong role in international development. In some respects this link went back to an earlier transnational set of links with the respective regions of the world and the role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) bodies in Spain.

A final point about representation – which was either individual or institutional, although rarely internally-network based – was that the question of immigration can only be understood if the question of emigration is discussed. One interviewee in the UGT agricultural section pointed out a colleague involved in his department who as a teenager would catch the train in Valencia with the workers travelling to France for the *vendange* and go along the train showing them the salary scales and going rates for the grape picking work. He would get off at the border and come back to Valencia and repeat the journey again. This was assisted by the Spanish UGT and the French trade unions. In effect, he was the carrier (the Mercury) of the regulatory process. As he matured, he then developed his work into supporting immigrants. Both the CCOO and the UGT had emigrant departments for Spanish workers abroad in countries such as France, the UK and Belgium. They would assist with

various projects and link trade union politics into the then diaspora of the post-civil war Spanish population. This eventually became transformed into the organisational platform for the immigrant sections, which would be driven by leading immigrant activists and individuals from the employment, social and women's sections of the union. In many ways this link between emigration and immigration is an important source of reference for personnel, politics and intervention on questions of mobility. It creates an internal sensitivity to the issue of migration that is embedded structurally – at least in the formal apparatus of the unions. In the case of the UGT agricultural section, a travelling exhibition of a town's experience of emigration in the 1960s and 1970s was used to sensitise Spanish people to their (perhaps fading) memory of the experience of emigration. Hence, Spanish unions have been highly innovative in making these types of connections, even if activism from immigrant communities has been a challenge in trade union terms, and autonomous special bodies have not been a feature of the strategy they have developed. Structures and alliances have been focused on specific like-for-like strategies in terms of union officers and the development of internal departments focusing on migration.

## 6. Challenges

A cursory glance at the activities of Spanish unions in relation to immigration reveals that there has been much innovation and engagement. This is a union movement that has drawn on its experiences and memories in relation to emigration, engaged with its social and gender-related structures, and developed very direct forms of engagement when it comes to the elaboration of a strategy regarding migration. However, there are some challenges in the manner in which this response has developed which may become more problematic in the immediate future.

Firstly, there has been a systematic dependence on the state for resources, and the development of social dialogue which may provide a challenge if political contexts change. Whilst conservative regional governments have been engaging with the *corporatist* approach to immigration and work, there is no guarantee this will continue, especially given the fundamental crisis of the state that Spain faces. This problem also brings forward the fact that regional states vary, and there are indications that there may be a more fragmented approach to the question of social inclusion in future.

Secondly, the core focus of the trade union response has been supportive social delivery through a range of educational and informational services. This has been done through the established apparatus of the trade union. One could argue that in the absence of a new wave of activists from immigrant communities, the trade unions have no choice but to proceed in this manner; but there are possible democratic deficits and gaps in relation to the immigrant workforce that may need attention.

Thirdly, this raises the issue that there are still not sufficient numbers of activists or levels of activism from immigrant communities. Much of the internal bureaucratic work of the unions still relies on its social and gender departments, directly or indirectly. This can be explained with reference to the fact that migrant-oriented occupations are mainly in less organised sectors and where there is a prevalence of SMEs. One interviewee from a construction company was concerned that there remained a cultural gap in terms of trade unionism and immigrant communities.

Fourth, there tended to be a separation in aspects of the work on immigration within the trade unions; although this problem was being met by merging the secretariats for employment and immigration, and linking the work of the advisory centres more closely to the sector federations. Hence the organisational politics of immigration was worth noting. This may appear to be an aside, but in countries such as the UK and the Netherlands the access of immigrants to public sector positions has allowed for a greater synergy, especially in the former, in terms of anti-racist and equality agendas and trade union agendas. Spanish public service trade unionists did not really see the immigration issue as being that pertinent – even if there were internal union officers related to immigration – and saw it as a client-related issue.

This leads to the fifth challenge, which is the fact that immigration in Spain has taken place mainly in highly flexible and vulnerable sectors. That is to say that immigrants have not had access to many core employment opportunities. This has meant that the trade union, which in the main has its power base located in the ‘core workforce’, has been less affected by immigration. Immigrants see themselves in the main as working on the periphery and within a less protected context. This remains one of the main challenges to immigrants, the trade union movement and the workforce as a whole, as working conditions become more difficult to regulate in a co-ordinated and centralised manner.

## 7. Conclusion

The Spanish case is interesting because of the manner in which the trade unions engage immigrants and address their needs. This is partly driven by a realisation that employers may use immigration to undercut the workings conditions of the Spanish population and that tensions may arise around local housing and employment issues. The response has been framed in two ways.

First it has been framed in terms of a class discourse which sees it essential to locate immigrants within the regulatory processes of the Spanish industrial relations system – for their own good and everybody else’s. The argument is that the gains and benefits of working class struggle are best defended by ensuring that these are not undermined by working conditions that are below the negotiated rates, themselves an outcome of struggle in recent years. In addition, the framing of such strategies in terms of class is an attempt to link the question of immigration into a broader framework where differences are understood in terms of the recent arrival (documented or undocumented) of workers, and not their ethnic or racial differences. In our interviews we detected a desire not to segregate the migrant issue so as to avoid creating splits within the working class and new social tensions – hence, for example, the apprehension about British trade union support for black workers’ sections. The aim is to pull immigrant workers into the regulatory reach of the union and the trade union itself – although how successful this has been is another matter.

Secondly, the trade union relation with the state has been a major mediating factor in this respect. That Spain does not have a strong neo-corporatist model is not really relevant, although some would argue that there is a strong dialogue between state and labour at various levels (Guillén Rodríguez *et al.*, 2008). The trade unions have worked with the state on various aspects in terms of immigrant policy, social and welfare services, and learning and training. Forums have developed at many levels of the state – albeit with variable outcomes and structures. These have allowed the different social stakeholders to co-ordinate their roles.

They have also had a political effect in creating spaces for dialogue and reflection. In addition there has been extensive state support for the development of various features of trade union work in relation to migration. In this respect, the emphasis of the trade unions has been on broad *solidaristic* social strategies in terms of the workforce and the state.

We could explain this in terms of the sensitivity to regulation and the nature of social dialogue and resourcing that exists in Spain. Yet we can also see it as being integral to the identities of the two major unions, which whilst partially different, emphasise the socio-political dimension in terms of the CCOO and the social welfare dimension in terms of the UGT. In addition, we can see how internal legacies and historical practices around emigration forged practices within these trade unions that became the basis around which innovation could be developed in terms of immigration. This has been central to the servicing of these new strategies, their staffing and their underpinning in ideological terms. Trade unions have almost become a link between the past trials and tribulations of the Spanish working class and the new immigrant communities. The CCOO project on emigrant memory was just such a case in point.

In addition, trade unions have, at a key point of their development, used their structures within the locality, the city and the region – the territorial presence – to underpin the organising and spatial interventions relevant for migration and its needs. The structure of the labour movement has allowed it to work beyond sector, occupation and work and look at local labour markets and local urban (and rural) issues with relevant structures. In addition, the social and equality (mainly gender) dimensions have acted as a point of reference for supporting these developments. Hence, the regulatory structures of Spain have been supplemented by the political and cultural structures of the unions in the way immigration has been perceived and understood.

There are challenges, and these have been noted above. However, the Spanish labour movement has been able to innovate and engage with these issues in a systematic manner. The case shows us that social inclusion strategies and politics can be established within the labour market and within society in a variety of ways. The next challenge will be to draw in the immigrant community and link labour unions more organically into this context.



## References

- Alonso, L. (2007) *La Crisis de la Ciudadanía Laboral*. Barcelona: Anthropos.
- Aragon Medina, J., Alba Arteaga, L., Haidour, M. A. Martinez Poza, A. Rocha Sanchez, F. (2009) *Las Políticas Locales para la Integración de los Inmigrantes y la Participación de los Agentes Sociales*. Madrid: Catarata Bruquetas-Callejo *et al.*, 2008.
- Bruquetas-Callejo, M., Garcés-Mascareñas, B., Morén-Alegret, R., Penninx, R. and E. Ruiz-Vieyetz (2008) 'Immigration and Integration Policy Making in Spain', *IMISCOE Working Paper*, No. 21 April 2008.
- Cachón, L. (2007a) 'Diez notas sobre la inmigración en España 2006', *Vanguardia Dossier*, No 22, January/March, Barcelona.
- Calavita, K. (2005) *Immigrants at the Margins: Law, Race, and Exclusion in Southern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Colectivo IOE (2001) Política migratoria española en el marco europeo. *Studi Emigrazione*, 38 (144): 855–868.
- Guillén Rodríguez, A., Gutiérrez Palacios, R., González Begega, S. (2008) Pactos sociales en España', *Cuadernos de Información Económica*, 203(marzo-abril): 173–81.
- Hiemstra, N. (2009) Immigrant "Illegality" as Neoliberal Governmentality in Leadville, Colorado', *Antipode*, 41: 74–102
- Jordana, J. (1996) 'Reconsidering union membership in Spain, 1977–1994,' *Industrial Relations Journal*, September, 211–24.
- Martin Valverde, A. (1991) *European Employment and Industrial Relations Glossary: Spain*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- Martin, C., and Velázquez, F. J. (1996), 'Una Estimación de la Presencia de Capital Extranjero en la Economía Española y Alguna de sus Consecuencias', *Papeles de Economía Española*, 66,160–75.
- Martinez Lucio, M. (1998) 'Spain: Regulating Employment and Social Fragmentation' in Ferner and Hyman (eds) *Changing Industrial Relations in Europe* (2nd Edn), Oxford: Blackwell.
- Martinez Lucio, M. (2008) '¿Todavía Organizadores del Descontento? Los Retos de las Estrategias de Renovación Sindical en España', *Arxius*, Summer.
- Martinez Lucio, M., Skule, S, Kruse, W, Trappmann, V. (2007) 'Regulating Skill Formation in Europe: German, Norwegian and Spanish Policies on Transferable Skills.' *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, 13 (3): 323–340.
- Miguélez, F. (1991) 'Las organizaciones sindicales', in Miguélez, F. and Prieto, C. (eds) *Las relaciones laborales en España*. Madrid, 213–32.

Miguélez F. and Recio, A. (2008) 'Spain: large-scale regularisation and its impacts on labour market and social policy', *Transfer*, 4/08 14 (4) 589–606.

Ortiz, L. (1996) 'Union Response to Team Work: the Case of Opel Spain', *Industrial Relations Journal*, 29 (1), 42–57.

Pardo, R. and Fernández, J. (1991) Las organizaciones empresariales y la configuración del sistema de relaciones industriales en la España democrática, 1977–1990, in Miguélez, F. and Prieto, C. (eds) *Las relaciones laborales en España*. Madrid, 147–84.

Prieto, C. (1991) 'Las prácticas empresariales de gestión de la fuerza de trabajo', in F. Miguélez and C. Prieto (eds) *Las relaciones laborales en España*. Madrid: Siglo XXI, 185–210.

Rigby, M. (2002) 'Spanish Trade Unions and the Provision of Continuous Training: Partnerships at a Distance', *Employee Relations* 24 (5) 500–15.

Toharia, L. (1988) 'Partial Fordism: Spain between political transition and economic crisis' in Boyer, R. (ed.) *The Search for Labour Market Flexibility: The European Economies in Transition*. Oxford: Clarendon press, 119–39.